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## COUNTY AND TOWN GOVERNMENT IN ILLINOIS

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Local government in Illinois has received considerable attention from others than those directly engaged in its operation, as illustrating important phases in the development of local institutions throughout the United States.<sup>1</sup> The best known accounts, however, have been based mainly on the statutory provisions; and have not given sufficient attention either to the earlier history or to the actual operation of local government in recent years. Since 1900, more thorough studies of some of the historical phases of the subject have been made, through the efforts of the Illinois State Historical Library, the Illinois State Historical Society and the University of Illinois.<sup>2</sup> During the past year, the writer of this article has prepared for a joint committee of the general assembly of the state a general survey of the historical development and a descriptive and critical discussion of the existing system and its operation. This survey forms the basis of this article.

### *Historical Summary*

To summarize briefly the main tendencies in the development of local institutions in Illinois is more difficult than is indicated by the sweeping generalizations of previous writers. A careful analysis of the complicated mass of detailed legislation shows many conflicting provisions; and the broader lines of movement have at times been seriously interrupted by counteracting and cross currents, which tend to confuse the situation. The most salient characteristics may, however, be noted along two main lines: the movement from a simple and concentrated organization to a highly differentiated list of local officials, as yet lacking organization and correlation; and

<sup>1</sup> Elijah M. Haines, *Township Organization: Its Origin and Progress in the Western States*. American Social Science Association, 1876; Albert Shaw, *Local Government in Illinois*. Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> *Publications of the Illinois State Historical Library and Society*, Nos. 2, 3, 9, 11, 12; *Bulletins of the Illinois State Historical Library and Society* Vol. 1, Nos. 1, 2; *Illinois Historical Collections*, Vols. II and V.

the movement from a centralized system, proceeding for many years in the direction of decentralization, but more recently showing some more centralizing tendencies.

During the various stages of territorial government in Illinois, local officials were appointed by the territorial authorities, and judicial and administrative functions were concentrated in the same hands. In these respects the local institutions followed the systems of Virginia and Kentucky. Provision was, however, made from the organization of the Northwest Territory for both county and township officials, the latter showing the influence of the Middle Atlantic States.

Under the first state constitution of Illinois (1818), the establishment of elective county commissioners formed a distinct step towards decentralization and the separation of judicial and administrative functions. These changes showed a tendency towards further development in the direction of the Pennsylvania system of local government. But during the first decade of the state, the disintegration of the early civil township, and the formation of distinct sub-districts of the counties for elections, roads and other local purposes showed the influence of the increasing migration from the Southern States.

Other changes during the period of the first state constitution were clearly in the direction of further decentralization of local administration. Justices of the peace were made elective in sub-districts of the counties in 1827; a considerable number of towns and a few cities were incorporated; in the last decade of this period a system of local school administration was organized based on the congressional townships and petty school districts; while the rapid multiplication of new counties, many of small area, showed the influence of the same tendency.

The second state constitution (1848) shows clearly the presence of conflicting forces. A series of restrictions on the formation of new counties put an end to further decentralization by this means; while the revival of county courts with both judicial and administrative powers, marked a return to the earlier and more concentrated machinery of county government. At the same time, however, the provisions for an optional system of township organization opened another way to further decentralization. But the town governments as established fell far short of the powers of the New England towns.

The township law followed closely that of New York; and its main features were the decentralization of road administration and state functions such as the assessment and collection of taxes, rather than the grant of important powers of local home rule. Nevertheless, the township system was rapidly adopted in many counties; while the incorporation of cities and small villages continued the process of administrative decentralization. The continued centralization of legislative power was clearly shown in the enormous and increasing mass of special legislation for counties, cities and other local districts, which forms one of the most notable characteristics of this period.

In the third state constitution (1870), special legislation was prohibited on a long list of subjects; and this restriction has been more effective than in other states in reducing the volume of special local acts. But this has not brought about any important general grants of legislative power to local authorities, and the main result has been to change the form of legislative control. Detailed general law or laws applying to certain classes of local districts have been passed in increasing numbers, adding to the complications of local administration.

The constitution of 1870 also returned to the separation of judicial and administrative functions in counties not under township organization, by reviving the system of county commissioners for such counties.

After 1870, the decentralizing tendencies continued for a time, in the further extension of the township system, and by the introduction (in 1887) of elective road district commissioners in counties not under township organization. The latter change removed one of the important distinctions between the two classes of counties in Illinois.

On the other hand, in the last twenty years there has been some tendency to increase the importance of the county as compared to the town, in the administration of poor relief and the assessment of property for taxation.

More notable has been the decline in the relative importance of the town, in comparison with the enormous development of municipal powers and functions in the incorporated cities. This enlarged importance of urban government has been due in the main to the increase of urban population; but also in part to the fact that the

municipal areas have been adjusted from time to time to correspond more closely to the convenience of administration than the fixed and artificial boundaries of the townships.

In the organization of town government, the town meeting has lost ground by close restrictions on the fundamental power of taxation, as well as by the failure to enlarge its authority; and the significant powers of town authorities are vested in administrative officials acting under the minute regulations of statute law.

Moreover there has been some development of state administrative authority, by the transfer of functions to state officials such as the assessment of railroad property by the State Board of Equalization, the development of state charitable institutions, recently more thoroughly centralized under the control of the State Board of Administration, and other state offices and institutions. There has also been some development of state aid and supervision of local authorities, through the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Charities (recently replaced by the State Charities Commission) and the State Highway Commission. But as yet this latter tendency is less notable in Illinois than in other states, such as Massachusetts, New York and Wisconsin.

The most general local government districts in Illinois are counties, townships and school districts. In addition there are organized many cities and villages, and also special drainage and park districts. These various municipal areas overlap each other; and the system as a whole is more complicated and confusing than in any other state.

### *County Government*

There are 102 counties in the State of Illinois, ranging from counties of less than 200 square miles and 7,000 population to counties of over 1,000 square miles and more than 100,000 population. There are twenty-nine counties with an area of less than 400 square miles, the constitutional limit for new counties; and there are half a dozen counties with an area of more than 1,000 square miles. There are fifty counties with less than 25,000 population, and seventeen counties with more than 50,000 population.

A good many difficulties in the operation of county government are due to these wide variations in the area and population of counties. It is safe to say that the county officers required by the con-

stitution are more than are needed in many of the small counties; and that more efficient and economical administration could be secured by combining two or more officials into one, or by giving some of the officials jurisdiction over several of the smaller counties, or by uniting several small counties into one.

County boards in Illinois are organized on three distinct types: a board of three commissioners elected at large, in counties not under township organization; a board of fifteen commissioners for Cook county, ten elected from the city of Chicago and five from the rest of the county; and boards of supervisors, elected by towns in other counties under township organization. The latter range in size from five members in Putnam county to fifty-three in LaSalle county. In eighteen counties there are thirty or more members in the board of supervisors.

The large board of supervisors has often been supported on the theory that the county board is the legislative branch of county government. But an examination of the powers and functions of county boards shows that, apart from making appropriations and levying taxes, for the most part they act as administrative bodies. For this purpose the large board is unwieldy and ineffective. Only five or six other states have county boards as large as the boards of supervisors in Illinois; and most, even of the states with town government, have county boards of from three to seven members.

A small majority of the replies to inquiries sent to county officials in Illinois in counties under township organization were in favor of a small board of county commissioners in preference to the present boards of supervisors. From thirty-nine counties under township organization there was a decided preponderance in favor of county commissioners; but a majority of the replies from thirty-four counties were opposed to small boards of commissioners. This situation seems to show the need for some other alternative, occupying perhaps a middle ground between the two main forms of organization now permitted in this state. At the same time much of the detailed administrative work now performed by the county boards should be done by county officers; and one of the county officers might well be recognized as the chief executive officer.

In each county there are elected from nine to thirteen officers. From four to seven county officers are elected at one time, at the general election in November of even-numbered years, along with

state officials and members of the general assembly. It is coming to be recognized that the long ballot necessary for so many elective officers prevents anything like true popular selection in the choice of these officers; and the demand for a short ballot calls for decided changes in the method of selecting county officers. Some improvement could be secured by eliminating statutory offices from the elective list; but as most of the county officers are provided for by the state constitution, a satisfactory solution can only be secured by amendment or revision of the constitution.

The county clerk has the most varied duties, and from his official contact with all branches of county administration is tending to become the *de facto* chief executive officer of the county. He is custodian of the county records, clerk and accountant of the county board and clerk of the county court; he has important duties under the primary and election laws, and in the assessment of property and the extension and collection of taxes; he issues hunters' and marriage licenses, and performs numerous other duties. If the county clerk were given some of the legal powers of a chief executive, the responsibility and efficiency of county administration could be improved.

The county judge, in most counties, deals mainly with probate administration; but in counties of over 50,000 population this business is vested in a separate probate judge. The county judge also has jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases, and has some administrative functions, mainly in connection with elections and taxation.

The county treasurer is not only custodian of county funds, but is also county collector of taxes (collecting state, county and local taxes) and supervisor of assessments in counties under township organization, and is assessor in counties not under township organization.

The clerk of the circuit court acts also as recorder, except in counties of more than 60,000 population, in which a recorder of deeds is elected.<sup>3</sup> In counties with a distinct probate judge, there is also a probate clerk.

The state's attorney is primarily a public prosecutor in criminal cases, acting as agent of the state; but he also acts as legal advisor and attorney for the county and county officers. This officer might

<sup>3</sup> In Cook county there are also circuit and superior court judges and additional court clerks elected.

well be appointed by the governor or attorney-general, as a direct representative of the central state government; and one official might act for two or more of the smaller counties.

The sheriff may be called the constituent officer of the county. His principal duties are now as chief conservator of the peace and executive agent of the judicial courts. In counties not under township organization, he is collector of taxes. By an act of 1905 if a person in the custody of a sheriff is lynched, the governor shall declare the office of sheriff vacant.

The coroner holds inquests on the bodies of persons whose deaths are supposed to be due to violence or other undue cause. The procedure is antiquated; and this work could be better done by appointing competent medical examiners, and authorizing the state attorneys to investigate cases where need for criminal proceedings is shown.

The county superintendent of schools acts as agent of the state in distributing the state school fund, and also inspects and supervises the local school officials, under the supervision of the state superintendent of public instruction. He forms a more effective intermediary between the state and the local officials in the smaller local districts than is provided in any other branch of public administration.

The county surveyor (a statutory office) makes surveys in special cases, for private parties or on the order of a court.

*County Finances.*—The development of county administration is limited by constitutional limitations on the tax rate and amount of debt; while the tax rate is further restricted by the Juul law. In fact the total amount of county taxes remained almost stationary from 1870 to 1900. Since the latter date there has been a considerable increase, from \$6,179,195 to \$11,546,266; but most of this has been in Cook county. The highest tax rates are in the small counties.

County expenditures are supposed to be under the control of the county boards. But numerous fees and some salaries and other expenses are regulated by statute; and about forty per cent of the county expenditures are paid without the action or control of the county board.

An attempt to compile statistics of county finances for analysis and comparison had to be abandoned for lack of data from most of the counties. But the information received from fifteen counties,



supplemented by a more detailed examination of the records of Sangamon and Piatt counties, serves to show clearly the inadequacy of existing accounting methods. Except in Cook county, no officer keeps a complete record of all the financial transactions of the county; and no statements are prepared consolidating and summarizing the records of the various officials. In fact, the different reports do not even cover the same fiscal year. The several officers receiving fees and commissions pay from these the expenses of their offices; and only the surplus is paid into the county treasury. At the same time, a large part of the fees and commissions are paid by the county; and to add together the total amounts in the several reports would involve duplication to a considerable extent. Expenditures are reported on the basis of warrants cancelled, instead of on warrants issued, and thus do not show the expenses properly chargeable to a given year. Nor do the present accounts and reports classify the expenditures for the main purposes of county administration, nor do they separate ordinary expenses from payments for permanent improvements, or compare expenditures with appropriations. No balance sheets of assets and liabilities are prepared.

To secure a satisfactory system of county accounts and financial reports there is need for the service of trained accountants. A number of other states have provided for county auditors; and by recent legislation auditors have been provided for Illinois counties with over 75,000 population. But there is clear need for establishing a uniform system of accounting in all the counties, with a regular inspection and audit of accounts by a state official, as is now established in Ohio and other states. Such arrangements would permit of the release of county officials and their bondsmen from further liability after their term of office.

*Poor Relief.*—Local relief in Illinois is furnished partly in county poor farms and partly by outdoor relief. Nearly every county maintains a poor farm and almshouse. Conditions in these institutions show some improvement in recent years, owing to closer inspection and the removal of the insane and other classes to state institutions. But the situation in most counties is far from satisfactory. The inmates of the county farms include the aged, blind, demented, feeble-minded, deaf and dumb and children; and as the average number in each county outside of Cook county is less than thirty, proper segregation of the different classes is impossible.

Petty politics often plays a prominent part in the management of these institutions. The average expenditure per inmate reported shows wide variations between different counties; while there are no satisfactory accounts of receipts and expenditures. In most counties hospital facilities and medical aid are inadequate.

In two-thirds of the counties the expenditure for outdoor relief is larger than that for the county farm. This aid is administered by the county commissioners and township supervisors, with appointed overseers in some places. In nine counties under township organization, the payments for outdoor relief are made by the town; in the other counties the expenses are paid by the county. The administration of outdoor relief lacks organization and system; reports, records and documents are defective and in many places lacking; while the range of expenditures in different counties shows the absence of any definite policy.

About thirty counties pay money pensions to blind persons, under a law of 1903; and in fifteen other counties allowances are made to some of the blind.

*County jails.*—The condition of the county jails in Illinois, as shown by recent inspections of the State Charities Commission, shows little improvement over conditions shown by the first examination of the former State Board of Charities in 1870. A large majority of the jails are old and unsanitary. Only ten counties had jails in first class condition; and in thirty-seven counties the jails should be condemned as unsanitary. In seventy-two of one hundred counties the law requiring the segregation of minors from adults was violated; in eleven counties there were no provisions for women, and in many other counties the women's cells were not segregated from those of the men. Only seventeen counties did not have insane persons in the jail. In twenty-nine so-called "kangaroo courts" were permitted.

### *Township Organization*

Any county may adopt or discontinue the system of township organization, on petition and a popular vote; a smaller petition being required for adoption than for discontinuance. There are now eighty-five of the 102 counties in Illinois which have adopted the township system. Since 1890 only two counties have adopted township organization; and under existing conditions

the counties with and without township organization seem likely to remain as they are. Most of the counties not under township organization are small in area and population, and all are in the central and southern parts of the state.

In the eighty-five counties there are 1,430 civil townships, with an average area slightly less than thirty-six square miles. Most of the townships are distinctly rural, with a population of from 1,000 to 2,000. But, except in Chicago, where the townships have been practically abolished, the townships include cities and villages within their geographical limits; so there are a number of townships of from 10,000 to 60,000 population. The township of Joliet contains 16,000 inhabitants outside of the city.

Towns in Illinois have very limited powers. They are vested with corporate capacity, and may levy local taxes and make by-laws for a few enumerated purposes and may vote to prohibit the grant of liquor licenses. They also elect a considerable number of officials, for road and judicial administration, and for the assessment and collection of taxes. But the matters which form the important business of New England towns are in Illinois looked after by the cities, villages and school districts.

Provision is made for an annual town meeting of the electors, on the first Tuesday in April, for the election of officers and the transaction of business; and also for special meetings. But in practice the town meeting is of slight importance. Its powers are closely limited,—the principal local tax (for roads) is levied by the highway commissioners—and in most towns it is attended by very few persons. Inquiries as to the attendance at the annual meetings in April, 1912, brought replies from less than a third of the towns in the state. Less than a third of these reported an attendance of more than fifty at the business meeting; and only thirty-nine towns reported an attendance of more than one hundred. In towns including cities of some size the town meeting is of even less importance than in rural towns; it is seldom attended by more than a handful of voters, and in some places no meeting at all is held.

Nearly three-fourths of the county officers who replied to inquiries as to the value of town meetings reported that they were no longer of any substantial service. Moreover, the strongest opinions in favor of the town meeting came, not from the northern counties where New England influences are most prevalent, but

from a few counties in the central part of the state. Many urged the abolition of the town meeting.

A town clerk, in a town of 2,500 population within fifty miles of Chicago, reported an attendance of thirteen persons, which included "six judges and clerks of election, two town officers, one professional candidate for moderator, and one innocent bystander in the booth marking his ballot, leaving three plain citizens, who were evidently interested in the meeting." In a period of twenty-five years, he states that on three occasions the road and bridge tax was levied at town meeting, and two resolutions had been adopted. Ordinarily the only business is to read the reports of town officers and levy the trifling town tax for miscellaneous expenses.

In a few towns the town meeting seems to be fairly well attended; but in some of these at least this appears to be due to local social customs rather than to interest in public affairs.

If the town meeting is to be continued, steps should be taken to enlarge its powers and to secure a larger attendance and interest. But for most towns in Illinois, the situation seems to call for a reorganization of town government, imposing more definite powers on officials who can be held responsible, instead of trusting to the few who accidentally attend a town meeting.

In each town there is elected a supervisor, town clerk, assessor, collector, three commissioners of highways, and two to five justices of the peace and constables. Assistant supervisors are also elected in the more populous towns. Most of the officers are now chosen for a two year term; but some officers are elected each year. Township elections are not subject to the primary law, presumably because this seems unnecessary in rural districts. But this results in the selection of important officials in towns which include cities by the unregulated caucus or "soap box" primary.

The supervisor and assistant supervisors are members of the county board. The supervisor also acts as town treasurer and in most towns as overseer of the poor. The duties of other officials are indicated by their titles. The supervisor, town clerk, and justices of the peace of each town constitute a board of town auditors.

A considerable reduction could well be made in the number of town officers. The assessment of property and collection of taxes could be more efficiently done by county officers; and a single highway commissioner would be better than three. The supervisor should

also be made more definitely the chief executive officer of the town.

Town finances are of very slight importance. The road and bridge tax is separately administered; and the general town levy is usually not more than two or three per cent of the total taxes, and averages less than six cents on the \$100 of taxable value. The principal expenditures are for the assessment of property for taxation and the compensation of town officers.

An examination of the financial records of town officers in one of the larger counties disclosed not only an absence of any system of accounts, but also the lack of the most essential data even as to cash transactions, and frequent errors in the extension of figures. The collectors' commissions, which form one of the principal items, do not appear in the town records. There is no attempt at a classification of expenditures.

### *Local Administration*

*Tax Administration.*—The assessment of property for state and local taxation in Illinois is made by county officers in the seventeen counties not under township organization, and in Cook county; and by town assessors, aided by county officers, in other counties under township organization. There have been prolonged and emphatic complaints of the results of the present system; and it seems clear that even real estate is far from uniformly or equitably valued, while the gross undervaluation of personal property is notorious. Assessments in counties under township organization appear to be more unsatisfactory than in counties where this work is in the hands of county officers. The revenue commission of 1886 and the special tax commission of 1910 recommended that town assessors be abolished and county assessors provided in all counties. County boards of review should also be reorganized, and a state tax commission established.

Taxes are levied for the state and various local authorities under a complicated series of statutes; while the aggregate amount of taxes which may be levied is limited by the intricate provisions of the Juul law. The present arrangements often lead to invalid levies and confusion; and there is need for more coordination and concentration of responsibility in making tax levies, as well as a less mechanical method of limiting the total.

In counties under township organization, taxes are collected by town collectors, and delinquent taxes by the county treasurer. In counties not under township organization, the sheriff is the collector. The tax collectors are allowed commissions on the taxes collected; both town and county collectors receiving commissions on the taxes collected by town collectors. There has been criticism of the town collectors as an unnecessary duplication of collection machinery; and some readjustment of the present system seems advisable.

*Road Administration.*—The construction and maintenance of public roads in Illinois are regulated by two distinct general laws, one for counties under township organization and the other for counties not under township organization, with a number of optional provisions for each class of counties. The main features of the two general laws are similar, each providing for the election of three highway commissioners in each town and road district, who levy taxes and look after the roads. Under the optional provisions, one county has a county system of road administration; and while some towns do all road work on a money system, many still use the primitive system of labor taxes. County aid is given in small amounts, mainly for the building of bridges.

Expenditures on the public highways have increased rapidly. The road and bridge tax has risen from \$1,259,851 in 1879 to \$5,673,235 in 1911. But there are wide variations in the rates levied in different sections of the state; and the present methods of administration clearly fail to secure anything like a satisfactory system of roads.

Complaints of the existing system of road management are even more numerous and general than with respect to other branches of local government. There is a strong demand for the abolition of town and road district commissioners, and the complete concentration of local road administration in county officials. There should at least be a thorough reorganization, with a single highway commissioner for each town and road district, road engineers for counties or larger districts, and a large measure of state aid and supervision in the development of a system of main highways.

*Justices and Constables.*—Justices of the peace and constables are elected by towns and election precincts throughout the state, except in the city of Chicago. In Chicago there is a municipal court, and

in nineteen other cities there are city courts, with elective judges; but in most cities the only local police courts are those of the justices of the peace. Under the fee system, which prevails in most places, there is room for abuse; and better results would be secured if municipal courts were established in cities in place of the justices. In the rural districts, there appears to be no serious complaint; but in the absence of any supervision over the justices there are no data on which to base an opinion.

*Elections.*—The large number of separate elections in Illinois, especially for various groups of local officials, is the subject of much complaint; and the burden of voting at from six to eight elections in a year easily accounts for the lack of interest in many elections. The local elections should be consolidated so far as practicable; and the primary law should be extended to townships including cities.

*School Administration.*—The management of public schools in Illinois is organized in a complex system, with state, county, township and school district officials. Local administration is primarily based on the petty school district, but includes a combination of township and district officers with county and state supervision. School townships are often not coterminous with the civil townships; and school elections are held at different times from both town and city elections.

While the school district is the smallest unit of local government in the state, the system of supervision by officials of larger districts is more thoroughly organized than in any other branch of public administration. To this systematic supervision of the district officials may be ascribed, in no small part, the greater efficiency of school administration. Certainly information as to schools and school finances is more readily available, through the system of reports, than for other local officials.

At the same time, there is criticism of local school administration; and the Education Commission in its report to the forty-sixth general assembly urged that the adoption of the township in place of the small school district as the primary unit would open the way to increased economy and efficiency in the educational work of the state. An examination of the reports of school finances indicates that under the present township management of school funds a large proportion of the funds handled are used for purely administrative expenses, which could be reduced if larger areas of administration were employed for this purpose.

*Conclusions*

This general survey of town and county government in Illinois confirms the results of other investigations in particular fields that the present decentralized and unorganized administrative machinery produces inefficiency and waste in the transaction of public business. Originating in a vague theory of local self-government at a time when, under frontier conditions, public business amounted to little, it has proved entirely inadequate to the complex social and industrial problems of to-day. The existing arrangements do not secure home rule for local communities in local affairs; but form a heterogeneous congeries of officials, lacking anything like systematic correlation to each other, and without effective responsibility either to the local communities or to the state, which vainly attempts to regulate their activities by an excessive degree of legislative centralization. To meet the conditions of to-day there is need for more systematic organization, and for a larger use of experts trained in special fields than can be secured by the smaller units of local government.

Where improvements have come in recent years, it has been by such means, as in the organization and supervision of local school administration, and in the more complete centralization of the greater part of public charity by the development of specialized state institutions. So, too, the movement for municipal home rule gains headway because the cities are securing a more systematic municipal organization, and deal with public affairs on a scale large enough to utilize the services of trained experts.

References are made throughout this paper to numerous proposals for changes in the organization of local administration in various areas and branches of the public service. Many of these have been primarily urged by students of special phases of the subject. May not the time be at hand when more rapid progress will be gained by taking a larger outlook and planning comprehensive changes along similar lines in the whole field of local government?

For any general and thorough reorganization of local government important changes will be required in several articles of the state constitution. In the article on counties, the provisions designating and requiring the election of county officers and the annual election of county commissioners and annual township meetings should be eliminated. In the article on the judiciary, detailed pro-



visions in regard to courts and the election of justices of the peace should be eliminated or made more flexible. The article on revenue should be amended to permit of changes in the present methods of taxation, and the limitations on tax rates and debt limits should be revised.

Such changes cannot be hoped for by the process of proposing separate constitutional amendments, which is more difficult in Illinois than in almost any other state; and to carry out a thorough reorganization of local government will require a constitutional convention to undertake a general revision of the state constitution.

Meanwhile, however, there are many changes and improvements which can be made by statute under the present constitution. These may be summarized as follows:

1. Provide for a uniform system of county and other local accounts, and for the annual audit of such accounts by state officers, so as to secure reliable data as to the finances of local authorities.

2. Provide a more efficient system for regulating the total amount of local taxes than the present Juul law. This will require a local body with discretionary power in place of the intricate and mechanical provisions of the present law.

3. Provide for the county assessment of property and for county collection of taxes.

4. An optional law vesting executive powers in the county clerk or some other county officer, and providing for county councils (comprising from seven to thirteen members) to be elected by districts within each county, to make appropriations, levy county taxes and exercise powers of local legislation. Such county councils have been established in Indiana.

5. Provide for the appointment of county or district road engineers; and authorize county boards to levy a county road and bridge tax; and with the approval of the voters to issue bonds for the construction of improved roads and bridges.

6. Authorize the State Civil Service Commission to hold local examinations for clerical and other subordinate positions in the larger counties.

7. Authorize county boards, on their own motion, to submit to the voters the question of adopting or discontinuing township organization; and prescribe a uniform rule as to the number of petitioners to require the submission of either question.

8. Provide that notice of annual town meetings shall state the business to be transacted, and fix a minimum attendance (of twenty-five) as a quorum for the transaction of business. Town meetings might well be granted additional powers to deal with the local problems of small villages.

9. All cities of over 10,000 population should be separately organized as towns; and in such towns the powers of town meetings and town officers should be vested in the city authorities.

10. Provide for a chief executive officer in each town, and also for a town board, to consist of the supervisor, town clerk, road commissioner (to take the place of the present highway commissioners) and justices of the peace. The town board to act as an executive committee and as a town board of health.

11. In counties not under township organization, one road commissioner and district clerk to be elected in each road district for a term of two years, the district road tax to be levied by the county board.

12. Town assessors and town collectors to be abolished.

13. Provide that town, road district, city, village and, so far as practicable, school elections shall be held on the same date, this date also to be the day for any general primary election held in the spring.

14. The township system of local school administration, recommended by the educational commission, would not only improve educational conditions, but would simplify the general system of local government in Illinois and increase the public interest in both town and school elections.

15. City courts or salaried police justices should be provided for all cities of over 10,000 population.